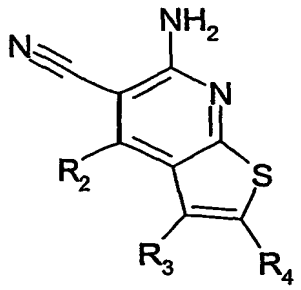
Claims:

1. The use of a compound of formula (I), or a salt, N-oxide, hydrate, or solvate thereof, in the preparation of a composition for inhibition of HSP90 activity in vitro or in vivo:



(I)

wherein

R_2 is a group of formula (IA):

$$-(Ar^1)_m-(Alk^1)_p-(Z)_r-(Alk^2)_s-Q \qquad (IA)$$

wherein in any compatible combination

Ar^1 is an optionally substituted aryl or heteroaryl radical,

Alk^1 and Alk^2 are optionally substituted divalent C_1-C_3 alkylene or C_2-C_3 alkenylene radicals,

m, p, r and s are independently 0 or 1,

Z is –O-, -S-, -(C=O)-, -(C=S)-, $-SO_2-$, -C(=O)O-, $-C(=O)NR^A-$, $-C(=S)NR^A-$, $-SO_2NR^A-$, $-NR^AC(=O)-$, $-NR^ASO_2-$ or $-NR^A-$ wherein R^A is hydrogen or C_1-C_6 alkyl, and

Q is hydrogen or an optionally substituted carbocyclic or heterocyclic radical;

R_3 is hydrogen, an optional substituent, or an optionally substituted (C_1-C_6)alkyl, aryl or heteroaryl radical; and

R_4 is a carboxylic ester, carboxamide or sulfonamide group.

2. The use as claimed in claim 1 wherein m is 1, each of p, r and s is 0, and Q is hydrogen.

3. The use as claimed in claim 2 wherein R_2 is optionally substituted phenyl, 2- or 3-thienyl, 2- or 3-furanyl, or 2-, 3- or 4-pyridinyl.

4. The use as claimed in claim 2 wherein R_2 is phenyl, optionally substituted by methyl, ethyl, n- or isopropyl, methoxy, ethoxy, isopropoxy, chloro, or bromo.

5. The use as claimed in claim 3 wherein the optional substituent is in the 4-position of the phenyl ring.

6. The use as claimed in claim 1 wherein m is 1, and p, r and s are 0, and Q is an optionally substituted carbocyclic or heterocyclic ring.

7. The use as claimed in claim 1 wherein Ar^1 is a phenyl or pyridyl ring.

8. The use as claimed in any of the preceding claims wherein R_3 is amino (NH_2).

9. The use as claimed in any of the preceding claims wherein R_4 is a carboxamide group of formula $-CONR^B(Alk)_nR^A$ wherein

Alk is a divalent alkylene, alkenylene or alkynylene radical, for example a $-CH_2-$, $-CH_2CH_2-$, $-CH_2CH_2CH_2-$, $-CH_2CH=CH-$, or $-CH_2CCCH_2-$ radical, and the Alk radical may be optionally substituted,

n is 0 or 1,

R^B is hydrogen or a C_1-C_6 alkyl or C_2-C_6 alkenyl group, for example methyl, ethyl, n- or iso-propyl, or allyl,

R^A is hydroxy or optionally substituted carbocyclic, for example hydroxy and/or chloro-substituted phenyl and 3,4 methylenedioxyphenyl; or heterocyclyl, for example pyridyl, furyl, thienyl, N-piperazinyl, or N-morpholinyl any of which heterocyclic rings may be substituted,

or R^A and R^B taken together with the nitrogen to which they are attached form an N-heterocyclic ring which may optionally contain one or more additional hetero atoms selected from O, S and N, and which may optionally be substituted on one or more ring C or N atoms, examples of such N-heterocyclic rings including morpholino, piperidinyl, piperazinyl and N-phenylpiperazinyl.

10. The use as claimed in any of claims 1 to 8 wherein R_4 is a carboxylic ester group of formula $-COOR^C$ wherein R^C is a C_1-C_6 alkyl or C_2-C_6 alkenyl group, or an optionally substituted aryl or heteroaryl group, or an optionally substituted aryl(C_1-C_6 alkyl)- or heteroaryl(C_1-C_6 alkyl)- group or an optionally substituted cycloalkyl group.

11. The use as claimed in any of claims 1 to 8 wherein R_4 is a carboxylic ester group of formula $-COOR^C$ wherein R^C is optionally substituted methyl, ethyl, n- or iso-propyl, allyl, phenyl, pyridyl, thiazolyl, benzyl, pyridylmethyl, cyclopentyl or cyclohexyl.

12. A method of treatment of diseases or conditions mediated by excessive or inappropriate HSP90 activity in mammals which method comprises administering to the mammal an amount of a compound as defined in any of claims 1 to 11 effective to inhibit said HSP90 activity.

13. The use as claimed in claim 11 or a method as claimed claim 12 for the treatment of cancer.

14. The use as claimed in claim 11 or a method as claimed claim 12 for immunosuppression or the treatment of inflammatory diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, multiple sclerosis, Type I diabetes, lupus, psoriasis and inflammatory bowel disease; cystic fibrosis angiogenesis-related disease such as diabetic retinopathy, haemangiomas, and endometriosis; or for protection of normal cells against chemotherapy-induced toxicity; or diseases where failure to undergo apoptosis is an underlying factor; or

protection from hypoxia-ischemic injury due to elevation of Hsp70 in the heart and brain; scrapie/CJD, Huntingdon's or Alzheimer's disease.

15. A pharmaceutical or veterinary composition comprising a compound of formula (I) as specified in any of claims 1 to 11, together with a pharmaceutically or veterinarily acceptable carrier.